

# Nancy Johnson



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## **Johnson Hails National Dairy Equity Act** *Ensures Fair Prices for Conn. Farmers and Protects Open Space*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congresswoman Nancy Johnson hailed today’s introduction of the National Dairy Equity Act (NDEA), new legislation to aid dairy farmers in Connecticut and across the country. Johnson is an original cosponsor of the legislation.

The NDEA is a comprehensive plan that establishes a minimum price for fluid milk and creates a market-based safety net for dairy farmers during times of low milk prices.

“Connecticut’s dairy farmers deserve stability in milk pricing,” Johnson said. “Dairies in our state are smaller operations, usually owned and operated by the same family for decades, and they cannot afford the sometimes wild fluctuation in milk prices. These family farmers are also environmental and open space stewards in Connecticut. This legislation will allow these producers to remain viable by keeping prices fair and stable through market-based initiatives.”

Connecticut Farm Bureau President Randolph Blackmer praised Johnson for her continued efforts to work to solve issues facing the dairy industry.

“Congresswoman Johnson knows the NDEA will be instrumental in helping address differences that have plagued dairy policy for so many years,” Blackmer said. “She knows Connecticut dairy farmers are some of the state’s original conservationists and by increasing their viability through the NDEA, they can keep working our state’s open lands, which benefit all our communities”

“Nancy Johnson understands dairy issues. She knows Connecticut dairy farms are about producing food and keeping land open. Those open, working spaces bring needed tourism dollars to our communities and helps maintain environmental integrity on large tracts of land,” Blackmer added.

The NDEA is a national program that establishes Regional Dairy Marketing Areas (RDMA) in the Northeast, Southern, Midwest, Intermountain, and Pacific regions. In each of the five RDMA, a Regional Dairy Board would be responsible for setting the minimum price for Class I (fluid) milk sold in that region, which farmers in the region would then approve.

Should the Class I price fall below the established minimum price, each region would receive market-based differential payments from a newly established national fund based on a set formula. In the event that the fund was to have a shortfall, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture could supplement the payments with federal dollars to ensure that the Regional Boards, and subsequently the dairy farmers themselves, would receive the full payments.

The Regional Dairy Boards would be comprised of three members from each participating state in that region. Each state delegation would consist of at least one producer and one consumer. On top of establishing minimum prices and distributing payments to local dairy farms, the boards would have the authority to conduct supply management programs when necessary, including the development of incentive-based programs.

The bipartisan National Dairy Equity Act was introduced in the House today. The Senate plans to introduce companion legislation on Thursday.

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